

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions of the claims in the application.

1. (Withdrawn, Currently Amended) An isolated polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6, and
- b) a polypeptide comprising a naturally occurring amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6[[,]],
- c) ~~a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6, and~~
- d) ~~an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.~~

2. (Withdrawn) An isolated polypeptide of claim 1 comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 6.

3. (Currently Amended) An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide ~~of claim 1~~ selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6, and
- b) a polypeptide comprising a naturally occurring amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.

4. (Currently Amended) An isolated polynucleotide ~~of claim 3~~ encoding a polypeptide ~~of claim 2~~ comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.

5. (Previously Presented) An isolated polynucleotide of claim 4 comprising the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:26.

6. (Original) A recombinant polynucleotide comprising a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide of claim 3.

7. (Original) A cell transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide of claim 6.

Claim 8 (Cancelled).

9. (Withdrawn) A method of producing a polypeptide encoded by a polynucleotide of claim 4, the method comprising:

- a) culturing a cell under conditions suitable for expression of the polypeptide, wherein said cell is transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide, and said recombinant polynucleotide comprises a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide of claim 4, and
- b) recovering the polypeptide so expressed.

10. (Currently Amended) An isolated polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polynucleotide comprising the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:26,
- b) a polynucleotide comprising a naturally occurring polynucleotide sequence at least 90% identical to the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:26,
- c) a polynucleotide fully complementary to a polynucleotide of a),
- d) a polynucleotide fully complementary to a polynucleotide of b), and
- e) an RNA equivalent of a)-d).

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Withdrawn) A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 10, the method comprising:

- a) hybridizing the sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides comprising a sequence complementary to said target polynucleotide in the sample, and which probe specifically hybridizes to said target polynucleotide, under conditions whereby a hybridization complex is formed between said probe and said target polynucleotide or fragments thereof, and
- b) detecting the presence or absence of said hybridization complex, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

13. (Withdrawn) A method of claim 12, wherein the probe comprises at least 60 contiguous nucleotides.

14. (Withdrawn) A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 10, the method comprising:

- a) amplifying said target polynucleotide or fragment thereof using polymerase chain reaction amplification, and
- b) detecting the presence or absence of said amplified target polynucleotide or fragment thereof, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

15. (Withdrawn) A composition comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

16. (Withdrawn) A composition of claim 15, wherein the polypeptide amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.

Claim 17 (Cancelled).

18. (Withdrawn) A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an agonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting agonist activity in the sample.

Claims 19-20 (Cancelled).

21. (Original) A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an antagonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting antagonist activity in the sample.

Claims 22-23 (Cancelled).

24. (Withdrawn) A method of screening for a compound that specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 1, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) combining the polypeptide of claim 1 with at least one test compound under suitable conditions, and
- b) detecting binding of the polypeptide of claim 1 to the test compound, thereby identifying a compound that specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 1.

Claim 25 (Cancelled).

26. (Withdrawn) A method for screening a compound for effectiveness in altering expression of a target polynucleotide, wherein said target polynucleotide comprises a sequence of claim 5, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising the target polynucleotide to a compound, under conditions suitable for the expression of the target polynucleotide,
- b) detecting altered expression of the target polynucleotide, and
- c) comparing the expression of the target polynucleotide in the presence of varying amounts of the compound and in the absence of the compound.

27. (Withdrawn) A method for assessing toxicity of a test compound, said method comprising:

- a) treating a biological sample containing nucleic acids with the test compound;
- b) hybridizing the nucleic acids of the treated biological sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides of a polynucleotide of claim 10 under conditions whereby a specific hybridization complex is formed between said probe and a target polynucleotide in the biological sample, said target polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 10 or fragment thereof;
- c) quantifying the amount of hybridization complex; and
- d) comparing the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample with the amount of hybridization complex in an untreated biological sample, wherein a difference in the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample is indicative of toxicity of the test compound.

Claims 28-49 (Cancelled).

50. (Withdrawn) An isolated polypeptide of claim 1 comprising a naturally occurring amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.

51. (Currently Amended) An isolated polynucleotide of claim 3 encoding a polypeptide ~~of claim 50~~ comprising a naturally occurring amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.

52. (Cancelled).